



American Bulldog Breed Standard

Revised 2015

Background: The American Bulldog originated as a catchdog (mostly cattle) and property protection dog in America's southeast. He was not bred to put on threat displays or to look a certain way. But, he did need the right equipment to take care of his real bulldog duties which were personal and property protection, as a catch dog and to be confrontational. He needed to be strong enough to put unruly bulls on the ground and athletic enough to catch hogs that were allowed to free range in a semi-wild state. The American Bulldog is a true farm utility canine.

General Appearance: The American Bulldog should generate the impression of great strength, agility, endurance and exhibit a well-knit, sturdy, compact frame with the absence of excessive bulk. Males are characteristically larger, heavier boned and more masculine than the bitches. The American Bulldog is a white or white and patched (brindle, red/fawn, black) dog. When patched he can range from the traditional pied markings of a patch over one or both eyes or ears, or a patch on the base of the tail, to a large saddle patch and various other patches. For judging purposes, distinctions between an ideal "Bully type" and an ideal "Standard type" are defined in bold and underlined.

Disqualifications: unilateral or bilateral cryptorchidism

Disposition: Alert, outgoing and friendly with a self-assured attitude. Some aloofness with

strangers and assertiveness toward other dogs is not considered a fault.

Disqualifications: viciousness or extreme shyness

Size: The height and weight should be balanced and proportional to the type.

Bully type: An ideal male should be 23 to 25 inches at the withers and weigh from 80 to 120lbs., females 22 to 24 inches at the withers, 60 to 90lbs. The weight should be proportional to size.

Standard type: An ideal male should be 24 to 27 inches at the withers and weigh from 75 to 110 lbs., females 23 to 26 inches at the withers, 60 to 90 lbs. The weight should be proportional to size.

Head: Medium in length and broad across skull with pronounced muscular cheeks.

Bully type: Large and round with a definitive stop preferred.

Standard type: Sleek, box or wedge shaped preferred.

Eyes: Medium in size and wide set. Dark brown preferred but other colors acceptable. The haw should not be visible. Full pigmented eye rims preferred.

Cosmetic faults: Pink eye rims, eyes that do not match in color.

Disqualifications: crossed eyes, divergent strabismus (wall-eyed)

Muzzle/Bite: Medium length (2 to 4 in.), square and broad with a strong wide underjaw. Lips should be full but not pendulous - 42 to 44 teeth. American Bulldogs are a working breed and should not be penalized for broken or lost teeth. Serious faults: pendulous lips, less than 42 teeth
Disqualifications: wry mouth

Bully type: Definite undershot, 1/4 inch preferred. The bite can vary from reverse scissor to 1/2 inch undershot.
Cosmetic faults: uneven incisors

Serious faults: a muzzle under 2 inches or over 4 inches, more than 1/2 inch undershot

Disqualifications: scissors bite, even bite

Standard type: Tight undershot (reverse scissors) preferred but up to 1/4 inch undershot acceptable.

Cosmetic fault: uneven incisors, even bite, scissor bite

Serious faults: a muzzle under 2 inches or longer than 4 inches, more than 1/4 inch undershot.

Nose: Black or Liver but black is preferred. On black/liver nosed dogs the lips should be full pigmented with some pink allowed. The nares should be large and open.

Cosmetic faults: a pink nose

Serious faults: pinched nares

Ears: Cropped or uncropped, with uncropped being preferred. Drop, semi-prick, and rose ears are preferred. The ears should be uniform, medium in size, and sit high on the head.

Serious faults: bat ears

Disqualifications: unilateral or bilateral deafness

Drop ears: When the ear is pulled down toward the eye, the ear should not extend past the outside corner of the eye. The tip is slightly rounded and hangs alongside the cheek.

Semi-prick: Ears carried erect with just the tips leaning forward. When the ear is pulled down toward the eye, the ear should not extend past the outside corner of the eye.

Rose ears: Should be small and set high on the head.

Neck: Muscular, medium in length, slightly arched, tapering from shoulders to head, with a slight dewlap allowed.

Cosmetic fault: excessive dewlap

Serious faults: necks that is short, long or thin

Bully Type: should be thicker than the Standard Type (slightly smaller than the head).

Standard Type: Should be longer than the Bully Type.

Shoulders: Very muscular with wide sloping blades, shoulders set so elbows are not angled out. The shoulders should be well laid back and forms, with the upper arm, an apparent 90 degree angle.

Serious faults: shoulders that are too steep without a lay back

Chest, Back and Loin: The chest should be deep and moderately wide without being excessively wide as to throw the shoulders out. The back should be of medium length, strong and broad. Loins should be slightly tucked which corresponds to a slight roach in the back which slopes to the stern.

Serious faults: sway back, narrow or shallow chest, lack of tuck up excessive roach

Bully Type: Shorter back that is proportional to height with a slight roach.

Standard Type: Slightly longer backed than the Bully Type. A flat topline preferred but a slight roach acceptable.

Hindquarters: Very broad and well-muscled and in proportion to the shoulders.

Serious faults: narrow hips, cow hocked, sickled hocked, twisted hocked, well let down hocks, under angulation, over angulation

Legs: Strong and straight with heavy bone. Front legs should not set too close together or too far apart. Rear legs should have a visible angulation of the stifle joint.

Serious faults: in at the elbows, excessively bowlegged, fiddle-chested

Feet: Of moderate size, toes of medium length, well arched and close together, not splayed. Pasterns should be strong, straight and upright.

Serious faults: hare foot, paper foot, splayed foot, crooked toes

Tail: Set low, thick at the root, tapering to a point to the top of the hock. Tail should not curl over back. The natural tail is preferred but a docked tail is acceptable.

Serious faults: screw tails, kinked tails, a tail that comes to a complete curl

Coat: Short, close, stiff to the touch, not long and/or fuzzy with no feathering.

Color: All white, pied, or up to 85% color (brindle, red/fawn, black), if there is color on the head it should appear to be color on a white head. Disqualifications: less than 15% white, blue, black and tan, tri-color, merle, full black mask

Movement: The gait is balanced and smooth, powerful and unhindered suggesting agility with easy, ground covering strides, showing strong driving action in the hind quarters with corresponding reach in front. As speed increases the feet move toward the center line of the body to maintain balance. Ideally the dog should single-track. The top line remains firm and level, parallel to the line of motion. Head and tail carriage should reflect that of a proud, confident and alert animal.

Movement faults: Any suggestion of clumsiness, tossing and/or rolling of the body, crossing or interference of front or rear legs, short or stilted steps, twisting joints, pacing, paddling, or weaving. Similar movement faults are to be penalized according to the degree to which they interfere with the ability of the dog to work.

Disqualifications:

- Unilateral or bilateral cryptorchidism
- Viciousness or extreme shyness
- Crossed Eyes
- Divergent Strabismus (Wall-Eyed)
- Wry mouth
- An even or scissors bite in Bully Type
- Unilateral or bilateral deafness
- Less than 15% white
- Blue color
- Black and tan
- Tri-color

- Merle
- Full black mask

Fault Degrees: A cosmetic fault is one of a minor nature. A fault not specified as cosmetic has to do with structure as it relates to a working dog. In a show or other evaluation, the dog is to be penalized in direct proportion to the degree of the fault. Any fault, which is extreme, should be considered a serious fault and should be penalized appropriately. We have not included a line drawing of a Bully type or Standard type American Bulldog because the drawing could not take into account the variations acceptable in the working American Bulldog. Attributes, other than cosmetic, listed in the standard all relate to working qualities which include but are not limited to agility, endurance, leverage, biting power and heat tolerance.

Point Breakdown for Judging

Overall proportion: 10 points
Temperament: 10 points
Total of 20 points

Head: size and shape 5 point
Muzzle/Bite: 5 points
Teeth: 5 points
Total of 15 points

Body: neck 5 points
Shoulders: 5 points
Chest: 10 points
Back: 5 points
Hindquarters: 10 points
Legs: 5 points
Feet: 5 points
Tail and Coat: 5 points
Total of 50 points

Overall Movement: 5 points
Front Reach: 5 points
Rear Drive: 5 points
Total of 15 points

Total of 100 points

Note: the distinctions made between the Bully type and the Standard type depicts an ideal representative of their respective types for show purposes only.

Summary of the Standard-type and Bully-type distinctions: In reality many American Bulldogs are hybrids of the Bully and Standard types. The distinctions between the two types were made to allow separate shows for Bully types and Standard types. Generally the Bully type distinction allows for a slightly larger dog and requires a 1/4 inch undershot lower jaw.